

REMARKS

Claims 10-12, 14-17, 19-28, 30-32, and 34-37 are pending in the application. Claims 10, 14, 27, 30, and 34 have been amended by present amendment. Claims 13, 18, 29, and 33 have been canceled without prejudice. The amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed (see, e.g., specification at page 3, lines 27-30).

The abstract was objected to because of "means" language. The abstract has been amended to delete the "means" language, and to delete reference numerals. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

The specification was objected to, and appropriate section headings are now provided. No new matter is added. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 29-31 were objected to because "locking means" should be replaced by "locking tangs" in claim 29. Claim 29 has been canceled without prejudice, thereby obviating the claim objection.

Claim 18 was rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 18 has been canceled without prejudice, thereby obviating the rejection.

As amended, independent claim 10 recites a connector, including:

at least one female part for forming a sealing connection with at least one male part; and

a plurality of locking tangs formed in the female part for engaging the male part, each of the locking tangs having at least one recess configured for receiving a tool to disengage the connection between the male and female parts,

the at least one recess extending transversely to a direction of movement of the locking tangs upon disengagement of the male and female parts.

Independent claims 27 and 34 recite limitations similar to those of independent claim 10.

For example, referring to FIGS. 3-4 of the application, a female part 1 includes locking tangs 2 configured to engage shoulders 11, 12 of a male part 8. As shown in FIGS. 3-4, recesses or holes 4 can be engaged by a tool to urge the tangs 2 outwardly to disengage the male part 8 from the female part 1 (see, e.g., specification at page 5, lines 15-19). Each hole 4 extends transversely to a direction of movement of the tangs 2 upon disengagement (see, e.g., specification at page 3, lines 27-30).

Claims 10-37 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,150,930 to Petty et al. ("Petty"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding the rejection of independent claims 10, 27, and 34 over Petty, the Petty reference does not teach or suggest a connector or a method for forming a releasable connection between at least one female part and at least one male part in which recesses/holes are formed in locking tangs, the holes "extending transversely to a direction of movement of the locking tangs upon disengagement of the male and female parts," as claimed.

Referring to FIGS. 1-2 of Petty, a corrugated pipe connector 1 is depicted, where the connector 1 includes a housing 2 having an open end 3 for insertion of corrugated piping (see column 3, lines 3-5 of Petty).

In Petty, two resilient locking members or fingers 9 are formed in walls of a bore 5, where the fingers 9 include projections 10 that extend into the bore 5, and the projections 10 lock into a single valley of the piping (see column 3, lines 19-23 and 35-40 of Petty).

Further, in Petty, a tool can be inserted into an opening 14 of the finger 9 to force the projections 10 out of the bore 5 (see column 4, lines 19-23 of Petty).

However, as shown in FIGS. 1-2 of Petty, the opening 14 is formed directly through the finger 9, such that the tool would be inserted through the opening 14 into the bore 5, which is in a direction of movement of the finger 9 during disengagement of the piping from the connector.

The above-described arrangement of Petty is undesirable for use with the Applicants' claimed invention at least because it requires a tool to be inserted into a space where a male part (here, the piping) is received, which may damage the male part during disengagement.

In contrast, according to the Applicants' claimed invention, recesses/holes are formed in locking tangs, the holes "extending transversely to a direction of movement of the locking tangs upon disengagement of the male and female parts," as claimed. As a result, it is possible to disengage the male and female parts, without having the tool enter a space where the male part is received.

For at least the reasons discussed above, the Petty reference does not anticipate or otherwise render obvious the Applicants' claimed invention. Therefore, independent claims 10, 27, and 34 and their respective dependent claims are patentable over Petty.

It is believed the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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